B2 (concluded)

roller 17 having higher roller precision becomes even higher, further improving transporting precision.--

REMARKS

Further to the Amendment filed January 7, 2003, the foregoing amendments have been made to correct minor errors in the specification. These changes are not believed to be new matter as they would be understood by an ordinarily-skilled artisan. Favorable consideration is requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO SPECIFICATION

The paragraph starting at page 19, line 19 has been amended as follows.

With the above-described embodiments, a thermoplastic elastomer with a hardness of [70] 70° (by the measuring method for hardness set forth in JIS (Japan Industrial Standard) A) and EPDM rubber material were used for the roller portions 16d and 17d of the first discharging roller 16 and the second discharging roller 17, but with the present embodiment, further improvement in transporting precision can be achieved by setting the friction coefficient μ of the roller portions 17d of the second discharging roller 17 situated farthest downstream in the sheet transporting direction as to the sheet P so as to be greater than the friction coefficient μ of the roller portions 16d of the first discharging roller 16 situated further upstream in the sheet transporting direction as to the sheet P.

The paragraph starting at page 20, line 7 has been amended as follows.

With the present embodiment, EPDM with a hardness of [50] 50° was used for the roller portions 17d of the second discharging roller 17, and an elastomer with a hardness of [90] 90° was used for the roller portions 16d of the first discharging roller 16. The friction coefficient μ of the two as to the sheet P was 1.2 for the former and 0.8 for the latter, and in the event that the same pressing force is applied, the article with a hardness of [50] 50° is capable of applying [higher] a greater transporting force to the

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sheet P. Accordingly, the degree of bearing on the precision of transporting sheets P with the second discharging roller 17 having higher roller precision becomes even higher, further improving transporting precision.

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